

The processing apparatus 6 is programmed to operate in accordance with programming instructions input, for example, as data stored on a data storage medium, such as disk 20, and/or as a signal 22 input to the processing apparatus 6, for example from a remote database, by transmission over a communication network such as the Internet 8 or by transmission through the atmosphere and/or entered by a user via a user input device such as a keyboard (not shown).

As will be described in more detail below, the programming instructions comprise instructions to cause the processing apparatus 6 to become configured to process payments from a user, and in response to a valid payment, to transmit instructions to a connected customer computer processing apparatus 4, 6 to enable the customer apparatus to control printer 18 to print a calibration object which, in this embodiment, comprises a photographic mat 24 having a special pattern of features thereon, or to control a display panel 19 to display the pattern of features so that the display displaying the features acts as a photographic mat. In addition, instructions are sent to the customer processing apparatus 4,6 instructing the user how to place a subject object on the photographic mat relative to the pattern

of features thereon so that the desired part of the subject object appears in the first image of a subsequently generated three-dimensional computer model of the subject object. The programming instructions further cause the processing apparatus 6 to become configured to process data received from a customer computer processing apparatus 2, 4 defining images of the subject object and the photographic mat so as to calculate the positions and orientations at which the images were recorded by detecting the positions of the features of the photographic mat pattern in the images, and to use the calculated positions and orientations to generate data defining a three-dimensional computer model of the subject object. The three-dimensional computer model is then made available for viewing on a display at a further computer apparatus (not shown) connected to the internet 8 in such a way that the first image displayed at the further computer apparatus is related to the pattern of features on the calibration object. In this way, by aligning the subject object so that the part thereof which is to appear in the first image is aligned in a predetermined way with reference to the pattern of features on the calibration object, the user can control the content of the first image of the three-dimensional computer model displayed at the further apparatus.

When programmed by the programming instructions, processing apparatus 6 can be thought of as being configured as a number of functional units for performing processing operations. Examples of such functional units and their interconnections are shown in Figure 1. The units and interconnections illustrated in Figure 1 are, however, notional and are shown for illustration purposes only to assist understanding; they do not necessarily represent units and connections into which the processor, memory etc of the processing apparatus 6 become configured.

Referring to the functional units shown in Figure 1, a central controller 30 provides control and processing for the other functional units, and a memory 32 is provided for use by central controller 30 and the other functional units.

An input/output interface 34 is arranged for the output of signals 7 to, and receipt of signals 7 from, apparatus connected to the internet 8, including the connected customer computer processing apparatus 2, 4.

A payment controller 36 is arranged to perform processing operations to obtain and check payments from a customer